BRITISH COLUMBIA

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tel (250) 387-0327
fax (250) 387-0329

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highlights

a weekly digest of recently released British Columbia statistics

Labour Force

- **British Columbia's unemployment rate fell 0.2 percentage points to 7.7% (seasonally adjusted) between August and September.** The drop in the jobless rate was attributable to employment growth of 0.6%, which was more than enough to absorb a 0.4% expansion in the labour force. Canada's unemployment rate also fell in September, decreasing 0.3 points to 6.8%. At the national level, the drop in the jobless rate was also due to employment growth (+0.4%). The number of people who were either working or actively seeking employment was virtually unchanged (+0.1%). Unemployment rates improved in most parts of the country, falling in all but two provinces. Newfoundland, which already had the highest jobless rate in the country, saw the rate climb 0.6 points to 16.3% This was not all bad news, as the increase was largely due to very strong labour force growth (+2.0%). Although employment in that province rose a significant 1.3%, the gain was not big enough to accommodate all the new entrants to Newfoundland's labour force. *Source: Statistics Canada*

- **Both full-time (+0.6%, seasonally adjusted) and part-time (+0.3%) employment in BC increased between August and September, although women benefited more from the job growth than men did.** Full-time employment among men was down 0.1%, and the number working part-time fell 4.3%. At the same time, the number of women with both full-time (+1.7%) and part-time (+2.3%) jobs increased.

  The public sector (+5.6%) was again largely responsible for the employment gains in September, as was an expansion in the number of self-employed workers (+0.7%) in the province. Private sector employers cut back the size of their work force (-0.9%) for the second time in the last three months. *Source: Statistics Canada*

- **Among the regions, Cariboo's unemployment rate climbed back into the double-digits (10.6%, 3-month moving average) in September after staying below ten percent during most of the last year.** The jobless rate in North Coast/Nechako (12.2%) was also well above the provincial average. Both regions saw the number of jobs and the size of their labour force contract during the 12-month period ending in September, as they did in Vancouver Island/Coast, where the jobless rate jumped to 8.8%. Unemployment rates in the rest of the province ranged from a low of 6.5% in Mainland/Southwest to 9.2% in Kootenay. *Source: Statistics Canada*

The Economy

- **The labour income of BC workers was unchanged at $5.6 billion (seasonally adjusted) in July.** Workers' earnings were generally flat across the country, edging up only marginally (+0.2%) at the national level despite strong gains in Alberta (+0.7%) and Ontario (+0.5%). Wages, salaries and benefits fell in five provinces and were flat in both BC and Quebec. Wages and salaries comprise about 88% of total labour income, with the other 12% coming from benefits paid by employers. *Source: Statistics Canada*

- **Department store sales in BC and the territories continued to slump in August, falling to 7.2% below the August 1999 level.** The latest decline marked the tenth consecutive month in which department store sales have fallen below the previous year's level. Sales softened in most parts of the country, decreasing 2.3% overall. BC/The North was hardest hit. The drop in other regions ranged from –5.6% in Nova Scotia to

Report **Employment Equity**

Did you know...

Canadians drove an estimated 79 billion kilometres during the last three months of 1999. That's the equivalent of circling the globe at the equator 1.98 million times–1.99 million times using the polar route.

–1.4% in Quebec. Newfoundland/PEI (+9.8%), Saskatchewan (+3.3%) and New Brunswick (+2.6%) escaped the general malaise.

Despite August's downturn, department store sales in most regions have been improving since the spring, and year-to-date, sales were up almost across the board. BC (-3.3%) and Nova Scotia (-0.3%) were the only exceptions. Canadian sales were 1.8% higher than in the first eight months of 1999. *Source: Statistics Canada*

- **The value of building permits issued by BC municipalities bounced back (+32.1%, seasonally adjusted) in August after slumping (-11.1%) in July as building permits continued their roller-coaster ride.** In August, permits for residential projects in the province were up 34.0% from July, while non-residential permits jumped 29.5%. Construction intentions for residential projects were at their highest level since September 1997. Nationally, the value of permits rose a more moderate 6.3%, largely due to a 10.7% increase in the residential sector. Permits for non-residential projects were up only 0.8%.

  Source: Statistics Canada

- **There were 771 consumer bankruptcies registered in BC in August, an increase of 27.2% over the same month last year.** Consumer bankruptcies in the province have been climbing steadily, rising at double-digit rates in all but two of the last 13 months. Bankruptcy statistics are usually volatile, but the increases during the last year suggest that the longer-term upward trend in consumer bankruptcies in the province shows no sign of abating. Nationally, the number of consumer bankruptcies appears to be tapering off after rising during the early to mid-1990s. *Source: Industry Canada*

- **Business bankruptcies in BC rose 11.3% in August, after dropping off sharply in the previous two months.** The number of business bankruptcies registered in the province has been trending down during the last two years. Year-to-date, the number of bankruptcies was down 10.1% from the first eight months of 1999.

  Source: Industry Canada

College Enrolment

- **During the 1998/99 school year, 17,752 students were enrolled full-time in career programs at community colleges and related institutions in BC.** Another 19,375 were working on university-level programs. Enrolment in career programs was up 18.4% from five years earlier, while the number of full-time students working on university degrees increased 20.2%. BC was the only province where university-bound students at colleges outnumbered those enrolled in career programs. Nationally, the number of college students enrolled full-time in career programs reached 298,898 in 1998/99, up 14.1% from five years earlier. This was nearly three times the number (104,618) of college students who were pursuing a university education. *Source: SC. The Daily*

Fire Losses

- **Thirty people died and 333 were injured in fires in the province during 1998.** Of those who lost their lives in a fire, 17 were men, nine were women and four were children. Ten of the fatalities were people aged 60 or over. Five died in fires that were caused by careless smoking. In addition, one person perished in a fire that was intentionally set, and another victim was impaired by alcohol, drugs or medication. Both fatalities and injuries in 1998 were lower than they have been during most of the last decade.

  Property losses from fires during 1998 totalled $153.8 million, down nearly $50 million from the previous year, when losses reached $202.3 million. One in four (1,558) of the 6,669 fires occurred in single or two-family dwellings. Another 478 fires were in apartment dwellings. About a fifth (485) of the residential fires were cooking fires. Arson resulted in 314 residential fires, while 225 were caused by heating equipment and 203 by smoking materials.

  Four out of every ten fires (2,619) reported to the fire commissioner in 1998 were automobile fires. These fires resulted in a loss of $13.2 million. Arson or suspected arson was implicated in 1,841 fires, 131 of which were set to cover up crimes.

  Source: 1998 Fire Losses in BC,Minisitry of Municipal Affairs

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For data originating from Statistics Canada: data sourced to 'Statistics Canada' has been retrieved from CANSIM, the agency's electronic database; otherwise the source is identified as 'SC' plus the publication name or catalogue number.

October 6, 2000

Infoline Report:

British Columbia Employment Equity Data

Contact: Anne Kittredge / (250) 387-0374

Originally published in July 2000 issue, *Earnings & Employment Trends*. Annual subscription: $60 + GST

Representation of Designated Groups
British Columbia - 1996

	Representation in the Population (%)	Representation in the Workforce (%)
Females	50.5	46.7
Visible Minorities	17.9	16.4
Aboriginal Peoples	3.8	3.0
Persons with Disabilities*	8.0	7.2

** Includes only those age 15-64.*

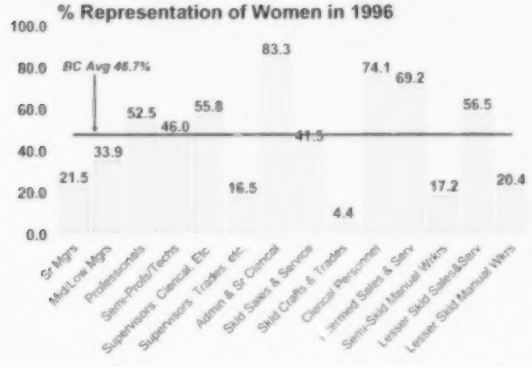
The current Employment Equity Act came into effect in October 1996. The "Act" and its regulations seek to identify and remove barriers to the employment of four groups -- women, visible minorities, aboriginal peoples and persons with disabilities. The intent is to ensure that these designated groups achieve a degree of employment that is in line with their representation in the population.

Data on various labour market characteristics of the four designated groups are required for monitoring progress. The box above shows the most recent data for the population and labour force representation of the four groups. These data are the employment equity measures released by the Labour Standards and Workplace Equity group in Human Resources Development Canada. The data source for women, visible minorities and aboriginal peoples is the 1996 Census while the 1991 Census and the 1991 Health Activity Limitations Survey provide the labour market characteristics of persons with disabilities.

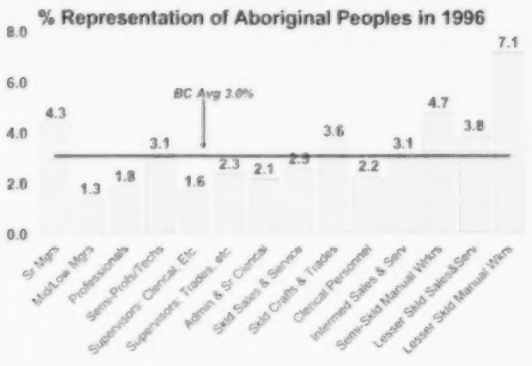
The data provide guidelines against which organizations can monitor their progress toward full integration of designated groups into their own workplaces. Besides the overall goal, the intent is to have a balanced representation in all types of jobs to ensure that the designated groups are not segregated in low skilled, low paid occupations. The charts on the next page show there is a long way to go before integration is achieved across the full occupational spectrum.

Women have made considerable progress in this regard over the last decade but remain severely under-represented in the trades. The chart on aboriginal peoples highlights the fact that there is considerable occupational segregation among this group in the lower skilled, and hence lower paid, jobs. Persons with disabilities show a similar pattern. Among visible minorities, there is a polarization in the workforce, with higher concentrations in the lower skilled jobs countered by high levels in the highly skilled management occupations.

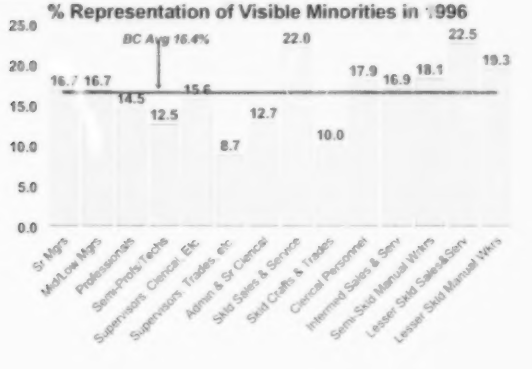
BC Women remain over-represented in the Clerical occupations and under-represented in the Skilled Crafts & Trades



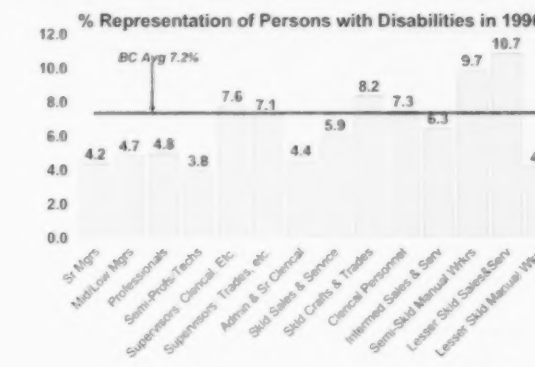
BC Aboriginals are relatively concentrated in the lesser skilled jobs. The exception to this is relatively high representation in Senior Management and the Trades



BC Visible Minorities are over-represented in both the high and lesser skilled Sales & Services jobs. They are very under-represented in the Skilled Crafts & Trades



BC Persons with Disabilities are extremely under-represented in management, professional and technical jobs.



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For more information, contact:

Kris Ovens Tel: (250) 387-0359 FAX: (250) 387-0380 or e-Mail Kris.Ovens@gems7.gov.bc.ca

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BC at a glance . . .

POPULATION (thousands)	Jul 1/00	% change on one year ago
BC	4,063.8	0.9
Canada	30,750.1	0.8
GDP and INCOME		% change on
(BC - at market prices)	1998	one year ago
Gross Domestic Product (GDP) *($ millions)*	110,948	-0.2
GDP *($ 1992 millions)*	99,708	0.2
GDP *($ 1992 per Capita)*	24,908	-0.8
Personal Disposable Income *($ 1992 per Capita)*	15,969	-1.6
TRADE ($ millions)		
Manufacturing Shipments (seas. adj.) Jul	3,107	-0.3
Merchandise Exports (raw) Jul	2,662	5.0
Retail Sales (seasonally adjusted) Jul	2,967,470	5.3
CONSUMER PRICE INDEX		% change on
(all items - 1992=100)	Aug '00	one year ago
BC	114.1	2.1
Canada	113.9	2.5
LABOUR FORCE (thousands)		% change on
(seasonally adjusted)	Sep '00	one year ago
Labour Force - BC	2,118	1.6
Employed - BC	1,955	1.8
Unemployed - BC	164	-1.2
		Sep '99
Unemployment Rate - BC *(percent)*	7.7	7.9
Unemployment Rate - Canada *(percent)*	6.8	7.4
INTEREST RATES (percent)	Oct 4/00	Oct 6/99
Prime Business Rate	7.50	6.25
Conventional Mortgages - 1 year	7.90	6.80
- 5 year	8.25	7.70
US/CANADA EXCHANGE RATE	Oct 4/00	Oct 6/99
(avg. noon spot rate) Cdn $	1.4985	1.4695
US $ *(reciprocal of the closing rate)*	0.6693	0.6805
AVERAGE WEEKLY WAGE RATE		% change on
(industrial aggregate - dollars)	Sep '00	one year ago
BC	648.06	3.6
Canada	624.19	3.8

SOURCES:

Population, Gross Domestic Product, Trade, Prices, Labour Force, Wage Rate } Statistics Canada

Interest Rates, Exchange Rates: Bank of Canada Weekly Financial Statistics

For latest Weekly Financial Statistics see www.bank-banque-canada.ca/english/wfsgen.htm

Released this week by BC STATS

- Exports, July 2000

Next week

- Labour Force Statistics, September 2000

BC STATS, Min. of Finance & Corporate Relations, Box 9410 Stn Prov Govt, Victoria, B.C. V8W 9V1
Tel: (250) 387-0327 Fax: (250) 387-0329 Web: http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca E-mail: BC.Stats@gems8.gov.bc.ca